

# GENIUS REIGNS IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS OF WASHINGTON THIS SEASON

In Series of Personal Interviews Its Distinguished Members Discuss Their Artistic and Literary Pursuits—Mme. Dumba, Wife of New Ambassador From Austria-Hungary, Interested in Her Work as Architect and Interior Decorator—Peruvian Attache a Professional Dramatist—Italian Ambassador Also Has Play on the Boards—Viscountess D'Azzy, an Author, Actress and Water Colorist.

BY JOHN ELBERT WATKINS.

GENIUS reigns in this season's diplomatic corps—that brilliant coterie of foreign officials accredited to our republican court. Washington welcomes these exotic geniuses not so much for their rank and titles as for their cleverness.

Lent finds them, now, back at their serious occupations, enjoying welcome relief from the frivolities of vanity fair.

The interview after a round of which among the little foreign colonies (which, although situated in Washington, are ruled over by emperors, kings and other potentates) found among the clever chateaux of their palaces an architect, an interior decorator, an actress, an author, two lacemakers, two skilled designers of artistic embroidery, a trained nurse and an authority on jewels; among their lords two successful playwrights and an author of note.

Architecture and interior decorating are the serious hobbies and well developed accomplishments of Mme. Dumba (nee Baroness von Lieven), wife of the new ambassador from Austria-Hungary.

"I have had much experience along these lines," she said, "and I am enthusiastically interested in the work. I have tried up our various homes abroad, where my husband has served, and I am at present busy with plans for our new embassy here. The appropriation for a new Austro-Hungarian embassy at Washington was not included in our budget of this year, but I am sure it will come before long. In the meantime I am planning the rooms and furnishing."

"My most recent work in house construction and furnishing was done at our own new home at Schloss Vesteberg, about an hour and a half motor ride from Vienna. The house was built in the twelfth century and has not been previously occupied since the sixteenth century. In order to make it habitable we were almost forced to rebuild it. The walls are very thick—about two yards of masonry and they were all of the original structure. Inside new floors have had to be laid, bathrooms and all modern conveniences installed."

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A. WASHINGTON PEZET, ATTACHE PERUVIAN LEGATION

planned for it extensive gardens and walks. "In America here," continued her excellency, "my fondest dream is to plan the new embassy building and furnish it. I feel that while I have not applied myself to drawing, painting or music continuously enough to accomplish anything of merit along any one of these lines, yet I have put my artistic training to practical use in the designing and furnishing of our houses. I am sure that to me, at least, this practice is not without its reward."

To induce her interest in house decoration Mme. Dumba had many opportunities. When her husband was accredited as Minister to Sweden she established the legation at Stockholm. Her city home in Vienna is a veritable art palace, furnished with art curios collected from all over Europe.

Mme. Dumba is of medium height, lithe and graceful. Her hair is a shade of bronze. She is young and vivacious. Her English is excellent and she speaks with a slight foreign accent is discernible when she speaks. This is the first visit that she and her husband have made to this country. He is a Roumanian Greek by blood, but a Viennese by birth and residence. The famous philanthropist, Nicolaus Dumba, was his uncle.

Kurland, one of the Baltic provinces of Russia, is the native home of Mme. Dumba. The customs of her birthplace are more German, however, than Russian. Having been tutored entirely at home, she never attended school. When, as a little girl, her father took her traveling all over Europe she developed her linguistic powers and saw the famous art galleries of France, Italy and Germany long before many little girls were aware that such places existed.

Her father was director of the imperial art collection in St. Petersburg. Thus both by heredity and by her own efforts she has a keen appreciation of art.

"I have not done any painting or drawing, however, since I was a little girl,"

she explained. "I have not the time to accomplish myself nowadays. I play the piano not well enough to think of performing before a drawing room full of people."

A professional dramatist is Alfonso Pezet, son of the minister from Peru and himself attache of the Peruvian legation here. Young Mr. Pezet's latest play—absolutely a professional production—was recently seen in Washington.

On the opening night, called ambassadorial night, almost the entire diplomatic corps was present to witness the work of their youthful colleague.

Not before this season has Mr. Pezet merited the distinction of this title. "Professional playwright" his work heretofore had been produced and acted off by amateur artists and generally for charity. Last season his "Remaking of the Ruchel" was presented in Washington for the benefit of a local philanthropy.

When eleven years of age Mr. Pezet was brought from Europe to live in Washington, where his father was secretary of the legation. After attending the Washington public schools he took a course at the Boston Institute of Technology and from there went to Harvard and took the drama course.

While living in Boston Mr. Pezet was manager of the Amateur Club, a dramatic organization. He played in many of its productions and was also manager of the club. He is a privately maintained establishment of that city.

In the choice of both work and play, therefore, his present preparation for his present line of endeavor was always his aim. He chose the play as his medium of literary expression rather than the novel or short story because he says it provides a broader field for the reproduction of American ideals and habits. And Mr. Pezet is essentially American in his tastes and viewpoint.

Another playwright of the diplomatic corps is the Marquis Cusani Confalonieri, ambassador from Italy. Final arrangements are now being made for the presentation in Washington in early spring of a three-act comedy, "Le Mari Amoureux des Femmes," which he has adapted.

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SENORA DE RIANO, WIFE OF SPANISH AMBASSADOR

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It has been erroneously reported that the Viscountess Benoit D'Azzy, wife of the naval attache of the French embassy is a playwright.

"It is not so," she said, a characteristic French shrug emphasizing her denial. "I have never written a play. My book, 'Dieu! has just come to me from the publishers. I have written it in French, and it is in the form of a letter to a distant uncle. The story is absolutely true to life. It is based upon my experience while in Constantinople in 1888 during the Turkish revolution and describes scenes which I visited while being taken about by a young Turkish officer, who took me into private places where I could never have gone with any one but a Turk."

Her husband at that time commanded the French flag ship and had an enviable experience there with him. I had several luncheons and dinners in the harem, where none but women are allowed to trespass. Thus I had an unusual opportunity to observe Turkish customs and I felt that I must give my information to the world in book form."

"One day, while on the street with this young Turk, his mother approached us, and although she was veiled, I recognized her, because we had met before. My escort very excitedly asked me not to look at her. I asked in amazement, 'Why?' she is your mother. Then it was explained to me that as it was not customary among his people for a man to speak to a woman on the street (even a husband not recognizing his own wife), it would be embarrassing for me to salute her when he could not."

When the writer called at the Italian embassy the marquis was leaving New York to arrange final rehearsals for his drama, which is being produced under

the auspices of the French Drama Society. He is also an artist of note. His canvases having been displayed at art exhibitions in both Washington and New York.

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MADAME DUMBA, WIFE OF AMBASSADOR FROM AUSTRIA HUNGARY

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phorous, and told of the wonderful spring that I saw in that region. Oh! the roses—how wonderful they were, and all the other flowers, too.

"I have written some theatrical criticisms for French journals and an article of mine, describing the mines and scenery of the French Alps, which I saw a few years ago, is soon to be published in a journal at home."

In her girlhood days the Viscountess was quite an accomplished water color painter. She also found time to do something, "avec une plume," as she put it.

But a talent which particularly endears Viscountess D'Azzy to society here, and which she is generous enough to exert for the benefit of charity, is one for acting. For more than two seasons she has played and managed amateur performances for the pleasure of the official circle.

"No, I have never had training in dramatics," she explained. "I have been frequently complimented upon the way in which I throw my voice and enunciate my lines, so that every one can hear and understand, but it is not the result of any dramatic training. My father always has been my taking lessons. He said that I must always be an amateur, and never adopt the methods of professional actors. For this reason I could never act with a professional player."

Like the French roles best known to her, she has been a frequent guest at the homes of her friends in Paris. My first appearance on a stage was when she asked me to appear in one of her tableaux. I succeeded well enough to be asked to do it again. Now I am, oh, so enthusiastic about acting."

Although an American, the wife of the Spanish ambassador, Senora Alicia de Riano, is one of the most exotic types in the entire diplomatic circle. She even follows the feminine occupations of her husband's native Spain—those of lace making and needlework—accomplish-

ments that every Spanish gentleman would claim.

Her mother, the Senora Riano, is a gem of lace alternating with squares of embroidery. These exquisite curtains—checkboards, as it were, of the rarest texture—adorn every window of the Spanish embassy on the Avenue of the President.

Another needleworker and lace-maker of the diplomatic corps is Mme. Nalon, wife of the Argentine minister. She makes the fine Irish crochet lace with which her children's clothes are trimmed, and which edges the pillows and high upon the drape and settee of the legation. Madame is an adept also at making the wonderful convent embroidery.

The dean of the diplomatic corps, M. Jules Jusserand, ambassador from France, is well known as an author of historical books and essays.

The Countess de Chambour, wife of the French minister, the French embassy—an American by birth and a sister-in-law of Mrs. Nicholas Longworth—is also literary. She recently published a commentary on the works of Shakespeare.

Unusual for a woman is the hobby of Lady Prabha Karavongse, wife of the minister from Siam. She is a gem of talent and is famed throughout the diplomatic corps as a wonderful judge of the value of precious stones. Her ability along these lines is said to be equal to that of any jeweler in the city. She has made no collection, having developed her skill simply for the quiet pleasure which she, personally, derives from it.

Another talented oriental is Ora Chang Kang-Jen, the little daughter of the charge d'affaires of China. Her embroidery upon satin most lifelike birds and most wondrous landscapes.

In the person of the Senora Beatrice Monica Calderon, wife of the Bolivian minister, diplomatic society has its own trained nurse. The Senora is an English woman, who has resided in America a great deal of her life. She comes of an English church family, the Ainsleys of Wakefield, Yorkshire.

"I took my course in nursing in New York," said Mme. Calderon, "with a view to taking a degree in medicine. I graduated from the Mount Sinai Training School and the Mount Parker Hospital, where I had my training in contagious diseases. I was married and that cut out my future work in medicine. I keep my finger in the medical journals and follow all of the new discoveries."

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Dressing the Cow.

VIC MARSHALL spent a recent vacation at the home of his father-in-law, near Phoenix, Ariz. He came back to Washington full of stories of the wealth of the region, but told friends that the natives of that part had to take very good care of their crops.

"Why, my father-in-law wraps his trees up on cold nights, and tends them like delicate children," he said. "He is as solicitous for the welfare of those trees as he was for his old Jersey cow back in Indiana."

When he was living in Indiana he had a cow that was a great family pet and an important item of family property. One summer the flies pestered the cow so much that he had to protect her from attack by extreme methods. He went down town and bought an old linen cap robe, such as they use in India, and he put it on the cow.

"Then he tied over the cow's back and secured firmly to her four legs. Then he had the old cap robe pulled up over her front legs and tied them over her head. He got another pair of overalls and tied them over her hind legs, so that she could not get her hind legs into them. But by that time the cow had decided that safety lay in flight, and she ran off. She even followed the feminine occupations of her husband's native Spain—those of lace making and needlework—accomplish-

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## Engineer Hopes to Raise Titanic With Electric Magnets, Submarines and Floating Camels

Denver, Col., Man Has Ambitious Plan to Clear Lost White Star Liner From Resting Place and Tow Her to Shallow Water—The Many Difficulties He Has to Overcome.

